Uncle Nels As a Plunger—

Lotta Fun, These Country Auctions

Wagonload of Junk Is Picked Up at Sale After Hi, Lowe and Jack Have Begun to Repair the Old House—Strategy Used With Millie and Sairy—All Hands Bid for Household Goods After They Have Agreed That "You Always Get Stuck at Auctions"—Solving the Mysteries of Red Barns and Scarcity of Lightning Rods—City Folks, Dealers in Antiques and Gift-Shop Managers Mingle With Farmers.

BY SEWELL FORD.

I'LL say we're being fixed up. For the Millikens, Hi, Lowe and Jack, have gone to it strong. Uh-huh. This trio of tourist mechanics that I captured from the side of the road and josbed into paying us a six-week visit at so much per day is certainly a busy bunch, and they're making the shabby old farmhouse, which had been dozing here under the big elms for fifty years or more, sit up and take notice.

First thing Pa Milliken did was to have a load of new window casings sent out and he putting them in at the rate of four or five a day, ripping out the old ones and replacing 'em with the kind that you can fit with cord weights and pulleys. And right behind him comes son Hi., with his paint pot and brushes, slicking up the outside trim and the wide old clapboards until we fairly glisten. Meanwhile the broad-shouldered Lowe has set up his bench vise in one of the sheds and is running pipes here and there under the floors and between the partitions, getting ready to connect up a couple of nice white bathtubs that now lie crated in the back yard.

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OF COURSE, we're more or less mussed up. There's hardly a room in the house that isn't littered with shavings or broken plaster or odds and ends of lumber. Most of us have smears of paint on our clothes, and it isn't safe to sit down in a chair without looking first to see if some one hasn't left a saw or a greasy wrench or a can of white lead on it. Our husky waitress, Millie Jewett as was—now Mrs. Duncan Stubbs—is limping around with a sprained ankle, from trusting her 180 pounds to a loose floor board; Sairy Jewett's uncertain temper is set on a hair trigger these days, because of so much traffic through her kitchen; and even Uncle Nels is on the casualty list because he would get too ambitious in helping unload some lumber and strained his back.

But for all that, it's rather a fascinating indoor sport, this taking an old house apart and putting it together again different. We plan out the changes as we go along, debating details as a committee of the whole, and then every afternoon when the Millikens have knocked off for the day, we go trailing around to see what's been done. And it's amazing how much enthusiasm we can work up over the taking out of a partition, the opening of a closed fireplace, or the changing of a closet into a bathroom.

At first I thought Sairy was going to turn balky at cooking for three extra people, but after Pa Milliken had put in a new kitchen sink and drain-board and added a few handy shelves here and there, she was as cooey to him as a turtle dove. As for Inez, when he'd finished off a big clothes closet in her room, with a nickeled rod for hangers and a shoe rack and some built-in drawers, I thought she was going to hug him.

Squire Sweat was out the other day to look over our improvements, and we had him going around with his eyes bugged. "Goshfry!" says he. "How'd you ever think up all them things to do? Your Aunt Luella wouldn't know the old place now. But say, you're goin' to need a lot of new furniture to put in all them empty rooms, ain't you?"

"Yes," says I, "I expect we will have to get a few chairs and things."

"I'll tell you, Miss Dodge," says he, "you better drop around to an auction I'm goin' to run day after tomorrow. Goin' to sell out an old place over the other side of Chenwick—the Tuttle farm. Might pick up a few things."

"That's a good hunch," says I. "Perhaps I will."

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WHEN I passed it on to the others I couldn't seem to get anybody interested. "Auctions!" grunts Uncle Nels, shaking his head. "I got no use for 'em. You're always gettin' stuck. Me, I went to one in Duluth, just for fun, in a Jap store by Superior street, and first thing I knew that feller had sold me a big pair of flower vases that I didn't have no more use for than a hen has for a toothpick. More'n 'leven dollars I had to pay, too. You better keep away from them auctions, Trilby May."

"That's dead right," chimes in Barry Platt. "I got rung into one on Broadway once, and before I got out they'd wished some junk on me that I had to pay a truckman to cart off and dump somewhere. None in mine, thank you."

"But this is a country auction," I protested. "Squire Sweat is going to run it, and he's going to sell a farm, and horses and cows and pigs and everything on it. Might be rather interesting, you know, and we needn't buy a thing if we don't care to. Anyway, I'd like to get away from this hammering and sawing for an afternoon. Let's take a chance."

So after more grumbling, in which even Inez joined, I persuaded them to go. They all insisted, though, that we should stop only half an hour or so, just to look on, and that nobody must do any bidding.

According to the handbill which Squire Sweat left the sale was to begin at 2 p.m. sharp, and by a good deal of prodding I got them there a few minutes before the hour.

It's one of these squatty, cozy old white farm houses, with green shutters and a red barn and a lot of sheds; a good deal like ours, in fact. But, then, all over New England they're like that. They have to be a sober lot, these pie-belt farmers, to tell their places apart when they come home from town. And why they should run so strong on red barns puzzled me a long time, until I finally asked Squire Sweat.

"Is it a state law, or what?" I demanded.

"Don't have to be," says he. "Red paint's cheapest."

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IT WAS the squire that solved another mystery for me—the scarcity of lightning rods on farm buildings up here. I supposed at first that thunderstorms were few, but since we've been here we've had three or four perfect corkers, and once a tree not far from the house was struck. Yet I don't remember seeing a single house or barn around Chenwick that was fitted out with protectors; while out in the middle west and up in Minnesota they're the regular thing. Nearly every set of buildings you pass will be decorated with twisted rods and fancy glas globes. Why, even Paw Dodge had 'em put on our shack. Course, the company had a hard time collecting the bill, but that didn't bother Paw much.

"You New Hampshire folks must trust a lot to luck," says I.

"It ain't that," says the squire. "But the lightnin' rod agents never bothered us much. Two of 'em starved to death tryin' to work this county, and I guess the others sort of stayed away. You see, we don't let go of our money real easy. It comes too hard."

"Im getting so, though, that I can see differences in these farm outfits. Some have a bunch of lilac bushes on either side of the front door, while others have 'em at the corners of the house. And every now and then you'll find one with the barn across the road instead of on the same side. Then again some will have an old stuffed sofa on the side porch, while others will have only a settee made from a discarded wooden bedstead.

This Tuttle place seemed to be the regulation kind, with the big hay barn connected with the house by a series of sheds, an apple orchard on one side, and a stone wall running along the front. But as we drove up it looked more like a picnic ground than anything else. All up and down the road and about the yard were horses and buggies, with all kinds of automobiles parked between, and people scattered around thick. There were all sorts of folks—farmers who'd driven up in various kinds of rigs, others who'd come in flivvers, and citified persons who were sitting in high-powered touring cars and limousines.

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IT WAS a chatty, folksy crowd, too. They were standing in groups under the apple trees, squatting on the grass in the shade, and streaming in and out of the front door. Every one seemed to be in good humor and holiday mood. You could tell that by the cheery way they hailed each other, and by the jokes they passed around. Rather a festive occasion. And yet I had understood from the squire that old Ben Tuttle, who had died only a month or so ago, was the last of a family that had been prominent in this district. Rather a pathetic story the squire had told us about this old bachelor who'd lived here alone for so many years, doing his own cooking and washing and mending, because a girl he'd been engaged to marry when he was twenty-five or so had gone back on him and he'd turned sour on all females. And he'd finally checked out, the village doctor had said, because he'd eaten his own soggy bread once too often. They'd found him curled up on the kitchen floor with a chunk of it still in one hand.

Anyway, there was no tragedy in the air this hot August afternoon. If Ben Tuttle's neighbors had ever felt sorry for him they'd gotten over it nicely, and now they'd come to see if they couldn't bid in some of his things at about one-tenth their real value. They were even ready to make funny cracks about the faded family photographs stacked in a careless heap by the front door. For the only heirs were some cousins who lived in Michigan and who hadn't bothered to come on for the sale. So everything was to go, down to the dusty old black felt hat which Ben Tuttle had left hanging on a peg in the front hall the last time he came home from a trip to the village. Even the old family Bible, with the record of births and deaths of at least three generations of Tuttles written in faded and scrawly letters on the back leaves. That was tossed into a soap box with a collection of almanacs, a third reader, a hymn book, and a treasury of verse with a tarnished gilt cover. A lot number had been chalked on the side of the box.

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AS we started to go into the house for a look around two helpers came staggering out with a heavy old secretary desk, and as we stepped one side a drawer slid out and dumped its contents on the walk. Among other papers was a bundle of letters, tied up with blue yarn.

"Aw, never mind that stuff," said one, as the other stopped to scrape them together.

"Huh!" said the first, stowing the

(Continued on Sixth Page.)

THEY'RE MAKING THE SHABBY OLD FARM HOUSE, WHICH HAD BEEN DOZING HERE UNDER THE BIG ELMS FOR FIFTY YEARS OR MORE, SIT UP AND TAKE NOTICE.

"I'LL TELL YOU, MISS DODGE," SAYS HE. "YOU BETTER DROP AROUND TO AN AUCTION I'M GOIN' TO RUN DAY AFTER TOMORROW—MIGHT PICK UP A FEW THINGS."

Is Clubdom of Paris Fading Away, Except Where It Is Americanized?

BY STERLING HELIG.

PARIS, August 3.

AT this moment, the most Americanized club of Paris—the Union Inter-Allies—is crowded with the most exalted personalities of old, exclusive Paris clubs. The Marquis d'Andigne, hereditary member of the Jockey Club, lunches willingly at the table adjoining that of Mr. Chatfield Taylor. The Duc de Gramont rubs shoulders with young Henry Bedford of the Standard Oil. The duc's own club, that of the Rue Royale, no longer has any premises, but has to double up with the Agricole. Yet that "of the Rue Royale" was once the strongest, highest-playing club of Paris!

Count Gabriel de La Rochefoucauld, of both the Jockey and Yacht clubs, cheerfully takes a look-in at the afternoon tea of the Inter-Allies, along with William Crocker of San Francisco, E. L. Riggs of Washington, D. C., and Harry Lehr of New York.

The Yacht Club, long ago, had to unite with the Automobile Club, happily full of new-rich Frenchmen, to keep up the rent.

And the president, even, of the "Epatant," Prince A. de Faucigny-Lucinge, feels more free from club financial cares in this new club garden, full of Americans, than on his own dust-blown terraces of the Concorde, formerly the very height of elegance, and therefore called "the astounding!"

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THE old, aristocratic clubs are fading away. It is a worry for members to frequent them, just to listen to endless discussions of their problems. But the new Inter-Allies Club, housed in the Rothschild palace beside French White House and British embassy (with grandioso garden of century-old trees, in mid-Paris, equal to that of either) is new, care-free, rich, utterly prosperous!

Also, it is full of Americans.

Eugene Higgins, James Hazen Hyde, Ogden Mills, William Sands (of the American International Corporation), Edward Tuck, William Astor Chanler (the explorer), Wesley Conn (of the Guaranty Trust Company), Percy Rockefeller and Frank Vanderlip are members. So are Bonnet, director of the Suez canal; Paul Dupuy, who owns the Petit Parisien; Leon Levy, director of the Chatillon-Commentry steel works, and the Count de St. Sauveur of the Schneider foundries, greater today than those of Krupp in Germany!

And a hundred others. So the Inter-Allies owns it own palace and garden—which were only loaned to it, formerly, as the Inter-Allies Officers' Club. Among the subscribers to its real estate fund were the great French banks, navigation companies and steel works, along with Anthony Drexel, the Equitable Trust Company, the Guaranty Trust Company, Otto Kahn, Morgan, Harjes & Co., Mortimer Schiff and Percy Rockefeller.

While this goes on, the Jockey Club, the proudest of them all, is under notice by its landlord and humiliated by a monster advertising poster of Deauville, which runs all around its twenty-seven windows on the boulevard and rue Scribe—just above those proud windows from whose balcony Jockey Club members whose witnessed every great parade and demonstration since the second empire!

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NOW, the landlord wants the Jockey Club to go. The building is for sale at 30 millions. The upper floors have been emptied and are utilized to threaten the Jockey Club with this continuous tawdry advertising. A department store desires to buy—and get immediate possession.

Jockey Club members flee their premises. They cannot bear the shameful sight—which is, indeed, a Paris scandal. Rents are up, up, up! Their old, long lease, from the wonderfully cheap days around 1880, habituated them to an easy rent—and yet it took some raising.

So, many Jockey Club members take refuge in the Travellers' Club, with which, for a time, there was talk of an amalgamation.

Think, now, an amalgamation!

Why, the Jockey Club, in its proud days before the war, had admitted only three American members! Gen. Pershing, I think, makes the fourth. But the Travellers' is just full of Americans.

Think, now, an amalgamation!

The Travellers' is so financially and socially flourishing that only last week it bought outright the building which it had formerly rented—the historic Paiva palace in the Champs Elysees—with a fund of a dozen millions subscribed entirely by its membership!

Among the Americans of the Travellers' are Frederick H. Allen, the copper magnate, Larz Anderson, Vincent Astor, George F. Baker, jr., Bernard Baruch, Perry Belmont, Spencer Biddle, Cortlandt Bishop, William Astor Chanler (the explorer, again), Corey of the Steel Corporation, Henry Disston, Clarence Dolan, Henry Coleman Drayton and Anthony Drexel.

When these men are in Paris they can drop in on a house dinner, and find themselves at home in a superior manner. Marshall Field is a member. So is Senator Elkins of West Virginia. So is Judge Fithian of San Francisco.

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THE mere list of prominent Americans would take up a quantity of space. There are J. L. Harriman, Oliver Hatch, F. C. Havemeyer, Oliver Iselin, Pierre Lorillard, Edward Livingston, Senator McCormick, Ogden Mills, Frank Munsey, Samuel Newhouse, the mining capitalist of Philadelphia, George Ochs of the New York Times, Elisha Riggs of the Washington Bank, Mortimer and Paris Singer, and C. A. Spreckles, of sugar fame.

And the Duke of Sutherland.

These English and European members use the club (you might say) more than do its American backers. There is the Duke of Marlborough, Lord Howard de Walden and Seaford, his highness the Rajah of Pudkota, the Marquis de Miranda, Lord Queensboro, and Prince Elim Demidoff, who is still rich. And, think, his grandfather, "the" Demidoff, was one of the chief founders of the Jockey!

Of course, they help to set the tone and add to the club's financial and social stability. You have heard of Barons Lionel and James de Rothschild. But here is the rich Dutchman, Etienne Uhlens de Shooten, and Jacques Chalmeton de Croy, heir to vast Belgian estates a thousand years back. A daughter of Leishmann of Pittsburgh, married the head of the German branch, a one-time reigning family, you understand, still capable of marrying royalty: James Hazen Hyde married the other sister. They are of the Inter-Allies.

And now, with finances and social prestige equally balanced, here enters the new element into the triumph of Americanized clubs of Paris—woman.

The Travellers' does not admit lady members.

The Inter-Allies admits them largely.

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Lady members are all over the Inter-Allies Club.

They add sweetness and graciousness—every minute after the lunch is over and their presence permitted. In fact, the fashionable tea hour of Paris is being advanced each week—in the scramble of the most elegant femininity of society and the tourist world to secure tables in the garden!

Mrs. Berry Wall (you will read) has as her guests Mrs. Winslow Williams and Miss Anne Williams, now in Paris on their annual visit. Mrs. Laurence Benet (who was Miss Cox of Washington, D. C.), had as guests Mrs. Gilbert King, Mrs. C. Custman and Miss Margaret Hume. Mrs. William Baker entertained Mrs. Hally-Smith. Mrs. Gilbert Jones (widow of the late owner of the New York Times) had a bright party, just landed. And, so, Mrs. Charles Prince (of Boston), Mrs. Harry Lehr (of New York), and the Marquise de Talleyrand (nee Curtis, of Brooklyn), all had guests just arriving.

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A WONDERFUL opportunity. All mixed up. There, eating buttered crumpets to the sound of trumpets, you see (next morning in the papers), were Mrs. Thomas Gilford, Mrs. James Terry, Mrs. W. L. Green, Mrs. J. Addington Goetz, Mrs. Harold Sheets, Mrs. J. C. Bulwinkle, Mrs. William L. Flanagan, Mrs. W. R. Wigham, the Countess d'Aramon, the Countess de Caraman, and Lady Millicent Hawes (the Duchess of Sutherland), all mixed together, members and invited guests, a brilliant throng. A crowd. A riot.

Women are not like men. Masculine clubmen are as mean as sin in this matter; but a lady will ask another lady to the club, just out of pure sweetness of disposition!

You cannot stop them. Nobody wants to stop them. There is safety in numbers!

The Travellers' Club admits lady guests to the large guest room, for a lunch or dinner of eight or more covers.

They may be shown, discreetly, over the Bijou palace which cost Napoleon III fifteen million francs (then worth half as many dollars; today!) Here lived the meteoric Paiva. The fabulous silver bathroom still exists. She was a Russian beauty of the humblest origin. Her husband was a little tailor. She came to Paris, turned musical, and fascinated Napoleon III. A Spanish nobleman, the Marquis de Paiva, married her. All went fine, until, one day, the marquis gave a great dinner party, and, at dessert, blew out his brains.

The room where it happened is the one room of the club to which no lady may be invited.

Nor ladies only. It is the one room of the club to which no member has the right to admit any guest, on any pretext, which is a great vexation to the ladies. But not on account of old Paiva.

It has become the club cardroom.

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EVERY member must settle his card accounts by 8 p.m. every Monday, and shall not play again until he has done so. If the losing account of any member at the end of a day exceeds 5,000 francs, he may play no more until he has paid up. Winners are paid on Tuesday evenings. "Losing" bons (I. O. U. memoranda) of the previous week cannot be exchanged against "winning" bons of the following week. They must be met by cash or check. When a member fails to pay the loss is shared in proportion by the winners who have had money from him during the week.

Members remaining after 2 a.m. are charged 20 francs each; after 3 a.m., a second fine of 40 francs; after 4 a.m., a third fine of 80 francs, and after 5 a.m., a fourth fine of 120 francs. These fines are cumulative. So, to tarry till the dawn costs 260 francs apiece. It helps the club.

But when there is a house dinner this by-law is not enforced.

It is all charming for old-style clubmen, men about town; but it is distinctly not the ideal of American business men on vacation in Paris. They acknowledge its convenience. In an afternoon they can get posted up on every coming event, and how to take it in. There is always good company. Nevertheless, they don't quite know what is expected of them. They feel uneasy. And their wives make them feel more so.

"I will sit up for you," they say sweetly.

But when there is question of the Inter-Allies' Club, they say yet more sweetly:

"I will go with you!"

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THE Inter-Allies, is today, a real club. You can call it an after-war work all you please. The Allies rally continues, worthily; but the grandiose site of its palace and grounds in mid-Paris, its solid financial situation, its independence of the cardroom, and its liberality to ladies makes the Inter-Allies fill a desperately-felt want in Paris clubdom.

Here, no haunting fears of financial responsibilities. Bridge is tolerated, but the committee makes no understanding to collect your winnings for you. Could anything be more charming?

So the ladies rush to it. And if American women use it freely, the French bless it more so by their presence. Of our Associated Ladies (who, only, can "admit" plain ladies) there are just Mrs. Oliver Belmont, Mrs. J. Ridgeley Carter (nee Miss Alice Morgan and whose husband is a partner in the bank), Mrs. Tower-Reilly of Philadelphia, Mrs. Goelet, Mrs. Harjes, Mrs. Harriman, Mrs. Lawrance (with an "a," New York and Pau), Mrs. Leishmann Hyde (of Pittsburgh), Mrs. George Munroe, Mrs. Ridgway (of the old Philadelphia family), the Marquise de Chambrun (nee Miss Nichols of Cincinnati), Princess A. de Faucigny-Lucinge (who was Mrs. Caroline Strickland, nee Foster), and the Princess Murat (nee Macdonald-Stallo of the Standard Oil family).

How are they not lost among French ladies of the grand committee only! Countess Paul d'Aramon, Duchess d'Ayon, Countess de Beaumont, Princess de Beauveau, Marquise de Boisgelia, Countess Bourbon-Busset, Duchess de Broglie, and we have not finished with the "B's" yet!

Then, the French Associated Ladies! Marquise d'Albufera, Mme. Edouard Allez, Mme. Georges Ancel, Countess Rene d'Argent, Mme. Jacques Arnavon—and a lot more before we finish with the "A's" yet!

And, next, the English Associated Ladies! Lady Baring, Lady Bullock, Countess of Derby, Lady Fellowes, Lady Hawes, Lady Kaye, Lady Sybil Knox, Lady Malcolm, Lady Patricia Ramsay (who comes to take tea, also), Mrs. Stanley, Mrs. Walford—and we have not got, yet, to a single "ordinary" lady member, be she French, American or English, nor a daughter, wife, niece, family friend or steamship acquaintance of a member "on their annual trip to Paris"!

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SEE the rush of ladies. They encumber the parade rooms, overflow the terrace, tidal-wave the garden and back-wash up against the bar itself! They lie in wait for the men of their families. Tea, tea, cakes, buttered buns! Alas, poor Yorick, I knew him well! At night, plain masculine members are so bumped and jostled on the monumental stairway that they cling to the balustrade, as if the ship were sinking. So much so, that husbands now say sweetly:

"I'll wait up for you, dear!"

This is a highly philosophical story.

Which way will the cat jump?

Which way will the world's clubdom orientate itself? Because, when Paris dances, the world turns giddy. Paris is where they try it on the dog.

THE JOCKEY CLUB OF PARIS, ONCE THE MOST ARISTOCRATIC AND LORDLY CLUB THERE, NOW HUMBLED BY THE LANDLORD WITH ADVERTISING POSTERS.

Venezuela's Pearls.

THE island of Margarita, off the coast of Venezuela, is one of the most celebrated centers of pearl fishery. The Spaniards, in the days of Columbus, found the natives of Margarita and the neighboring mainland decked out with pearls, and the pearl-producing oysters of that locality have never since failed in their productiveness.

Metal scoops are dragged over the oyster beds, and the interest of the search culminates when the sheils thus secured are opened. A black pearl is a rarity commanding a high price. Fine white pearls, if of good luster, are also very valuable. A company of Frenchmen enjoys a concession from the Venezuelan government to fish for pearls with diving apparatus.

"Two Bits."

TO northern and eastern people the term "two bits" may sound like a slang expression, but to the people of the west and southeast it is a common, if not provincial, one. The expression "a quarter" is seldom used there. It is invariably "two bits." It is, moreover, much easier to say "six bits" than "seventy-five cents."

Explanation of the term "bit" comes from the reference to the monetary system in 1792, when the Spanish milled dollar became the unit of money. At that time there happened to be coined under Spanish authority a piece of silver for Mexico representing the eighth part of a dollar called a "real," after the name of a coin in Spain, and with the same value as the early American shilling. Yankees used the shilling as a common expression, and some can remember when farmers in the central and eastern states employed their extra help at so many shillings a day. Six, eight, ten and twelve shillings were heard in all lines of trade.

When the "forty-niners" went to California and the southwestern part of the United States they found that dos reales of the Mexican was the equivalent of two shillings in the United States. Later dos reales became common as a quarter.

Americans have absorbed very few Mexican words. While the language is filled with German and French words, few Spanish words are found. The Americans never learned to say "dos reales," but they may have Americanized that amount by saying "two bits." Hence it may be that "two bits" is of southwestern and not eastern origin.

Testing Colors.

THE fading of colors in dyed materials and wallpapers is said to be caused by the invisible ultra-violet rays in sunlight. Formerly, observed an expert in such matters, the carpetmakers and dye merchants in Europe tested the colors by sending their materials to be exposed in the strong sunlight of the south. Now they get the same results by using the electric mercury-vapor lamp and a quartz tube. By exposing the materials to the ultra-violet rays thus artificially produced they can in a few days and in any climate test the permanency of the colors. . . .